

Message Text

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ORIGIN NASA-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ADP-00 SCI-06 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 DODE-00 IO-13 INT-08 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 PA-03

PRS-01 USIA-15 NSC-10 L-03 PM-07 ACDA-19 /142 R

DRAFTED BY NASA:DMORRIS:OSM

8-1-73 X22080

APPROVED BY AF/C:APALMER

AF/C:COHEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MA

SUBJECT: FONMIN ATSIRAKA VISIT TO NASA

1. AT COURTESY CALL ON NASA ADMINISTRATOR FLETCHER, JULY 26, RATSIRAKA ASKED (1) WHAT WAS JURIDICAL BASIS OF NASA PRESENCE IN MADAGASCAR; (2) WHAT WERE NASA'S INTENTIONS RE MALAGASIZATION OF STATION; (3) WHAT WERE NASA'S FUTURE INTENTIONS FOR STATION.

2. BACKGROUND OF ORIGINAL OCTOBER 7, 1963 AGREEMENT (TIAS 5473) AS EXTENDED BY EXCHANGES OF NOTES ON MAY 2, 1966 (TIAS 6024) AND SEPT 16, 1971 (TIAS 7213) WAS EXPLAINED TO FOREIGN MINISTER AND TEXTS PROVIDED AT HIS REQUEST.

3. NASA ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR TRACKING AND DATA ACQUISITION TRUSZYNSKI EXPLAINED NASA-SPONSORED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MALAGASY PERSONNEL NOW IN OPERATION AT TANANARIVE STATION, CITING PARALLEL ACTIVITY IN ECUADOR AND FACT THAT NASA POLICY HAS BEEN TO WORK TOWARD FULL OPERATION BY INDIGENOUS PERSONNEL AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE AT ALL OVERSEAS STATIONS. IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT QUESTION ON PACE, UNCLASSIFIED

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TRUSZYNSKI SAID ON BASIS CURRENT PROGRESS HIS GOAL WAS FOR

STATION TO BE RUN COMPLETELY BY MALAGASY PERSONNEL UNDER DIRECTION OF MALAGASY TECHNICAL DIRECTOR WITHIN THREE YEARS. HE STRESSED NORMAL NASA PRACTICE TO HAVE NASA STATION MANAGER AS INTERFACE BETWEEN GODDARD NETWORK HEADQUARTERS AND TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF STATION. RATSIRAKA WAS POINTEDLY

INTERESTED IN LEVEL OF TRAINEES, WHERE TRAINING TOOK PLACE, AND WHETHER NASA HAD YET IDENTIFIED PROSPECTIVE MALAGASY TECHNICAL DIRECTOR. TRUSZYNSKI EXPLAINED THAT BASIC TRAINING WAS USUALLY ACCOMPLISHED IN TANANARIVE BUT THAT SELECTED INDIVIDUALS WERE BROUGHT TO GODDARD FOR SPECIALIZED TRAINING. SAID WOULD BE SOME TIME BEFORE HE WOULD EXPECT SELECTION OF FUTURE MALAGASY TECHNICAL DIRECTOR.

4. TRUSZYNSKI EXPLAINED THAT CURRENTLY UNDERSTOOD NASA SCIENTIFIC AND APPLICATION SATELLITE PROGRAM REQUIRED SUPPORT FROM THAT GEOGRAPHIC AREA FOR AT LEAST 3 TO 5 YEARS. WE WOULD THUS WISH TO RENEW OUR AGREEMENT AND EXPECTED THAT EMBASSY WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY IN NEAR FUTURE.

5. RATSIRAKA MENTIONED HE HAD RAISED QUESTION OF MALAGASY OFFICIAL PRESENCE AT STATION WITH EMBASSY. ALTHOUGH AMBASSADOR HAD ASSURED HIM THAT THIS WOULD BE TOTALLY ACCEPTABLE TO NASA, HE THOUGHT IT GOOD TO CONFIRM THIS WITH NASA DIRECTLY. DR. FLETCHER EMPHASIZED THAT NASA HAD WELCOMED FONMIN'S SUGGESTION WHEN FIRST REPORTED BY EMBASSY AND SAID HE FELT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD PROVE VALUABLE TO BOTH SIDES.

6. DURING VISIT TO GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER LATER SAME AFTERNOON, RATSIRAKA WAS BRIEFED ON EARTH RESOURCES TECHNOLOGY SATELLITE (ERTS) PROGRAM, AND VISITED TRACKING AND DATA ACQUISITION FACILITIES WHERE HE SPOKE VIA NASA COMMUNICATION LINK WITH GENERAL RAMANANTSOA. ALSO MET MALAGASY TECHNICIAN RAMAROJAONA IN TRAINING AS TANANARIVE CONTROL SYSTEM TECHNICIAN FOR NASA'S STATIONARY METEOROLOGICAL SATELLITES TO BE LAUNCHED IN JANUARY AND MAY 1974 AS PART OF INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH PROGRAM.

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7. DURING TOUR OF CAPE KENNEDY FOLLOWING SKYLAB 3 LAUNCH JULY 28, RATSIRAKA OBSERVED THAT CURRENT AGREEMENT MADE PROVISION FOR PAYMENT OF RENT AND WONDERED WHAT AMOUNTS HAD BEEN INVOLVED DURING PAST DECADE. UPON HEARING THAT UNIVERSAL PRACTICE HAS BEEN FOR HOST COUNTRIES TO MAKE LAND AVAILABLE FOR NASA STATIONS RENT FREE, RATSIRAKA OBSERVED THAT THERE WAS "ALWAYS A FIRST TIME FOR EVERY-

THING." IN ENSUING CONVERSATION HE SAID THAT WHILE HE RECOGNIZED MANY BENEFITS TO MADAGASCAR FROM THE STATION SUCH AS THE SALARIES OF BOTH AMERICAN AND MALAGASY EMPLOYEES, UTILIZATION OF COMSAT TERMINAL AND TRAINING OF PERSONNEL, HE WAS INTERESTED IN MAXIMIZING BENEFITS IN FUTURE WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

8. RATSIRAKA WAS OBVIOUSLY SURPRISED BY HEAVY EXTENT OF RELIANCE ON MALAGASY PERSONNEL AT STATION ALREADY AND COMMENTED FAVORABLY TO AF/C DIRECTOR COHEN ON NASA "FORESIGHT" IN MOVING SINCE 1969 TOWARD FULL INDIGENOUS OPERATION. RATSIMANDRESY ALSO SPOKE FAVORABLY OF NASA OPERATION IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH COHEN.

9. NASA UNDERTOOK PROVIDE RATSIRAKA WITH DETAILED INFORMATION ON TRAINING POSSIBILITIES AVAILABLE IN EARTH RESOURCES AREA THROUGH NASA'S SCHOLARSHIPS AT UN AND OTHER PROGRAMS BY US DEPT OF INTERIOR AND AID. COPIES OF SUCH INFORMATION PROVIDED TO HIM JULY 31 BEING POUCHED EMBASSY. ROGERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, MILITARY BASE AGREEMENTS, TRACKING STATIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE151355
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DMORRIS:OSM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730864/aaaabuzd.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NASA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10-Jan-2002 by reddocgw>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2002 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FONMIN ATSIRAKA VISIT TO NASA
TAGS: PFOR, TSPA, MA, NASA, (RATSIRAKA)
To: TANANARIVE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005